

Methow Conservancy



Okanogan County Commissioners
123 Fifth Avenue North, Room 150
Okanogan, WA 98840

April 25, 2016

Board of Directors

Richard Hart
(President)
Mary Johnston
(Vice-President)
Mary McCrea
(Treasurer)

Ashley Lodato
(Secretary)

Peter Bauer
Kristin Devin
Mary Drobka
Andy Hover
Gordy Reynaud
David Schooler
Stephanie Stewart
Alexa Whipple

Executive Director
Jason Paulsen

Associate Director
Sarah Brooks

Land Program Manager
John Sunderland

Stewardship Director
Heide Andersen

Educational Programs
Director
Mary Kiesau

Conservation Biologist
Julie Grialou

Monitoring and IT
Coordinator
Dawn Woodruff

Land Project Manager
Jeanne White

Membership Assistant
Mary Morgan

Bookkeeper
Joy Schwab

Dear Commissioners,

Please accept this cover letter and the enclosed attachments as background information in support of my presentation today.

During the last legislative session in Olympia, the Legislature enacted several important changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. One of these changes allows organizations like the Methow Conservancy, an independent and locally-based land trust based in Winthrop, to seek funding under the Critical Habitat grants program which was formally restricted to State agencies like the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Another important change includes language requiring anyone seeking funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Programs to confer with the local government body (e.g. county or city) as part of the application process.

Lastly, the Legislature instructed RCO to develop project ranking criteria that recognize that individual properties can provide multiple benefits, and that objectives including habitat, agricultural, and recreation are not mutually exclusive.

This letter and my presentation are to let you know that the Methow Conservancy will be seeking funding through the WWRP Critical Habitat and/or State Farmland Preservation programs in 2016 for a total of two conservation easement projects (see attachments). Each of these projects seeks to keep land that has been used agriculturally in agricultural use, and contributing to the economy, and character of the Methow Valley. These projects will have no negative impact upon the property tax revenues contributed by these properties, and are the result of private landowners contacting the Methow Conservancy to explore conservation-based outcomes for their land.

If funded and successfully completed, the Methow Conservancy would hold the conservation easements, monitor the properties at least annually, and serve as a partner to the landowners in the years ahead as they work to steward their lands.

If the Board of Commissioners would like to submit a letter expressing either concern or support for these projects, the new legislation (RCW 79A.15.110) provides that written comments should be sent directly to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. Please don't hesitate to call me if you have questions regarding either of these projects.

Sincerely,


Jason Paulsen
Executive Director

**Methow Conservancy
2016 WWRP Project Summary
Okanogan County, Washington**

Lehman Uplands Conservation Easement

Location: East of the East County Road between Twisp and Winthrop, bisected by Balky Hill Road. See Property and Vicinity Maps Attached.

Historical Use: Agricultural (Cattle Grazing), Open Space

Future Use: Agricultural (Cattle Grazing), Open Space

Landscape Type: Shrub-Steppe Uplands, Mule Deer

Proposed Acres: 1,028 +/-

Current Tax Status: Current Use Ag

Projected Impact to County Property Tax Revenue: None

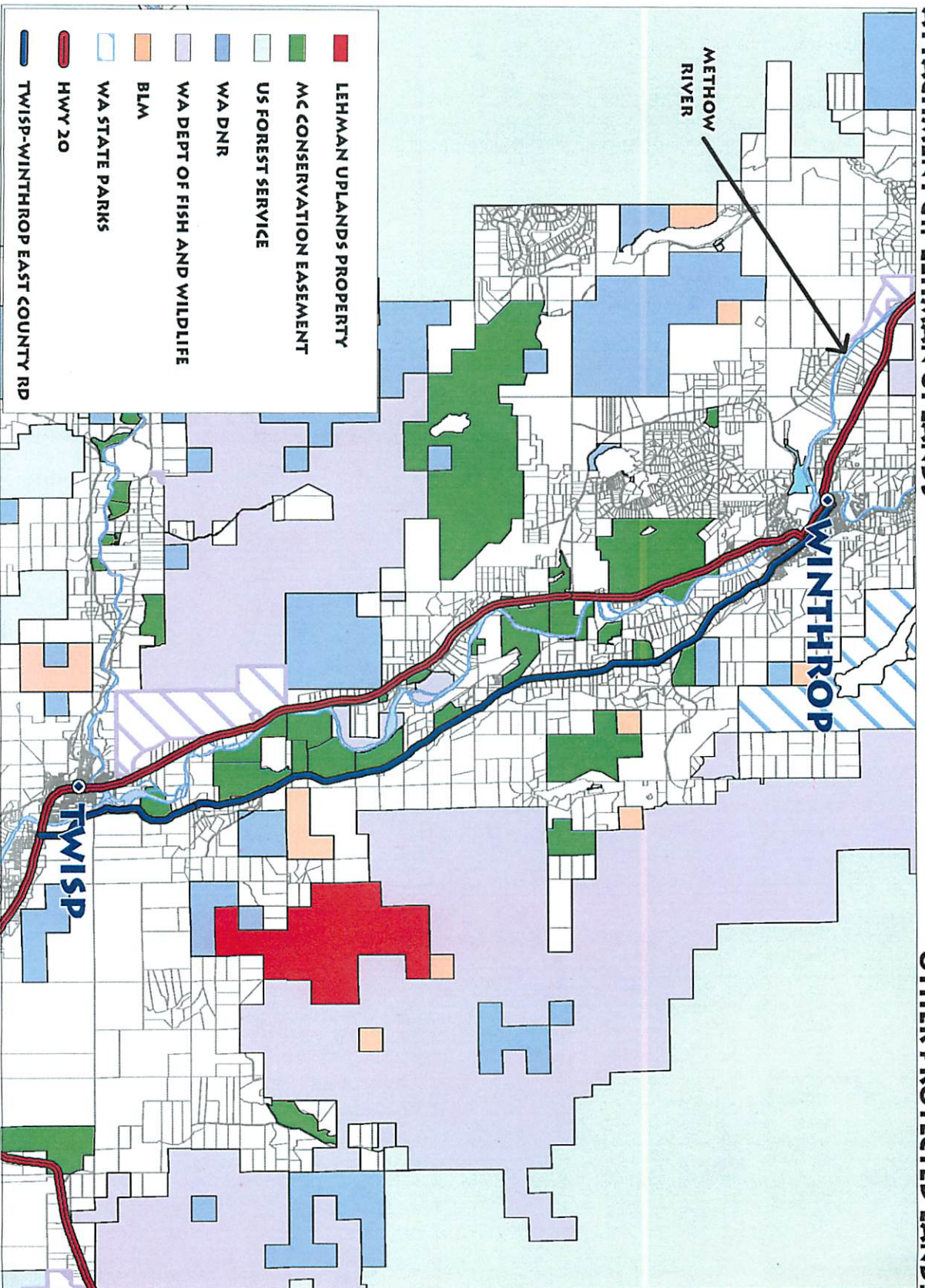
Stewardship Goals: Repair/ replacement of fencing lost in 2014 fire; Continued weed abatement, Restoration of shrubby draws impacted by 2014 fire.

WWRP Program(s) to be Applied To: Critical Habitat, Farmland Preservation

Anticipated WWRP Grant Request: \$1.3M + allowable transaction costs.

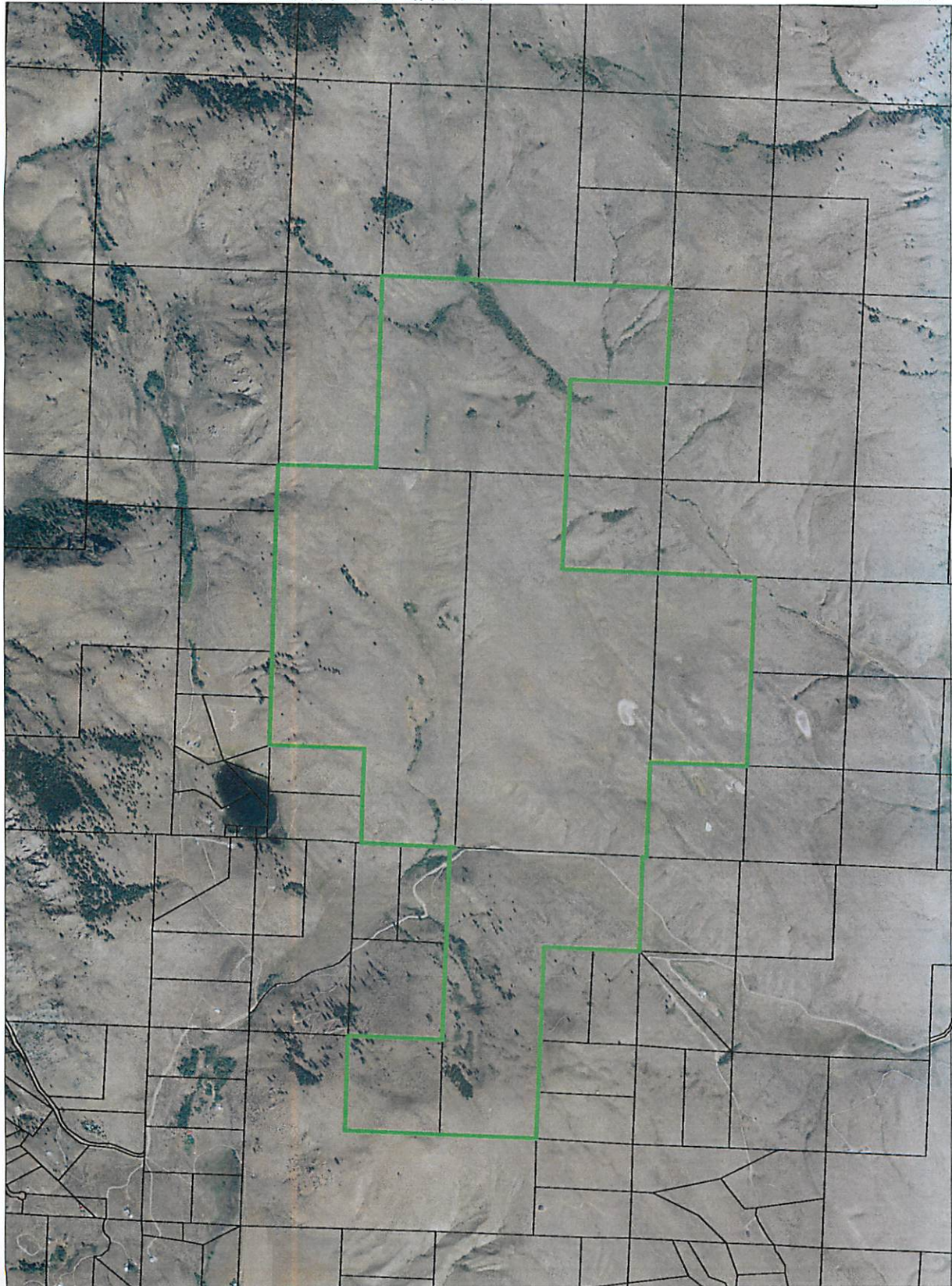
ATTACHMENT C1. LEHMAN UPLANDS

OTHER PROTECTED LANDS



ATTACHMENT B. LEHMAN UPLANDS

SITE MAP



 **PROPOSED EASEMENT AREA**

SCALE: 1 INCH = 2,000 FEET

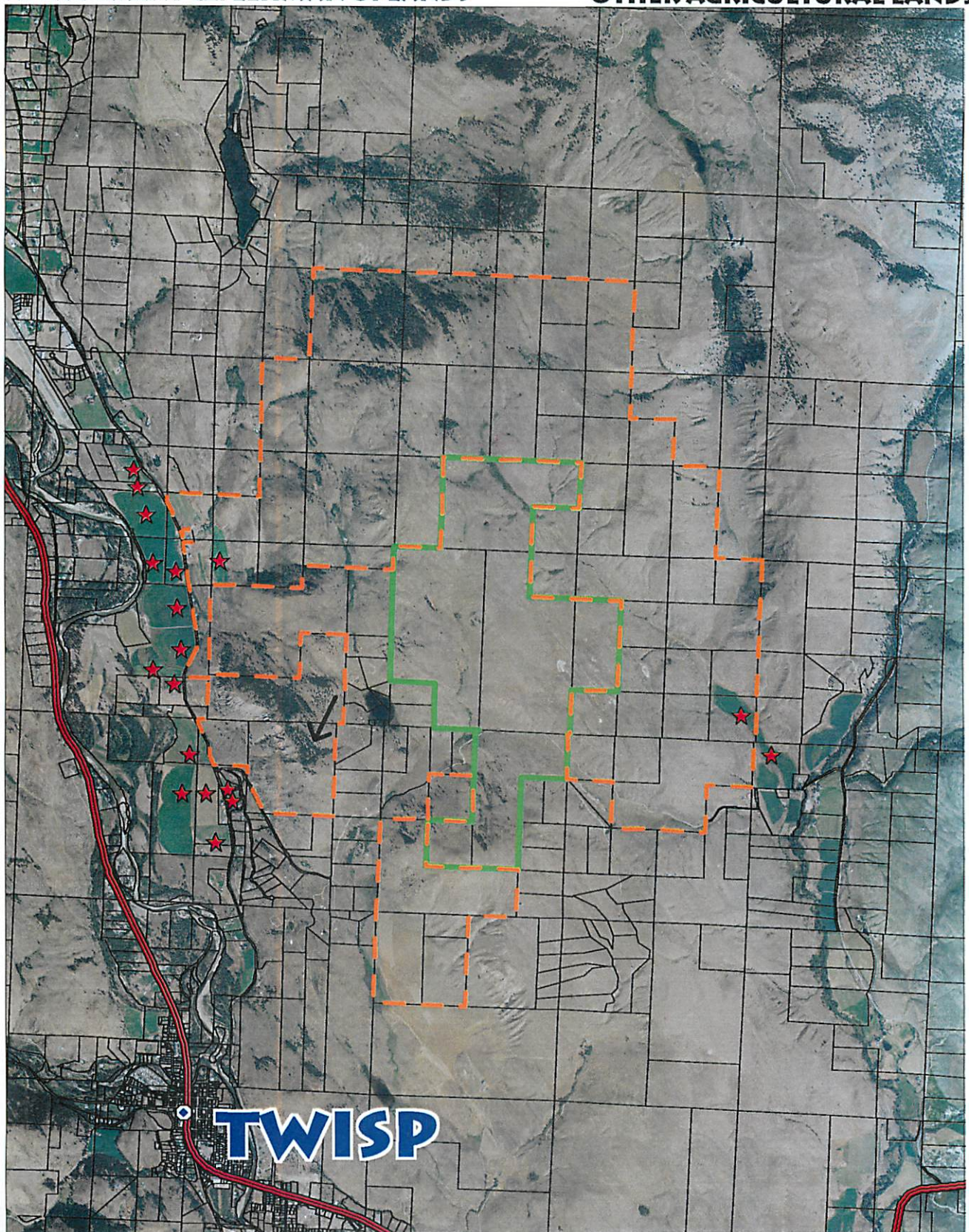
AERIAL: 2013

1/08/16



ATTACHMENT C2. LEHMAN UPLANDS

OTHER AGRICULTURAL LANDS



PROPOSED EASEMENT AREA



IRRIGATED AGRICULTURAL LAND WITHIN 1 MILE OF PROPOSED EASEMENT AREA



GRAZING LAND WITHIN 1 MILE OF PROPOSED EASEMENT AREA

SCALE: 1 INCH = 0.75 MILE

AERIAL: NAIP 2013

1/08/16



**Methow Conservancy
2016 WWRP Project Summary
Okanogan County, Washington**

Black Canyon Orchard Conservation Easement

Property Location: Along SR 153 @ Black Canyon

Historical Use: Agricultural (apple orchard)

Future Use: Agricultural (orchard)

Landscape Type: Orchard Property

Acres: 35

Current Tax Status: Current Use Ag

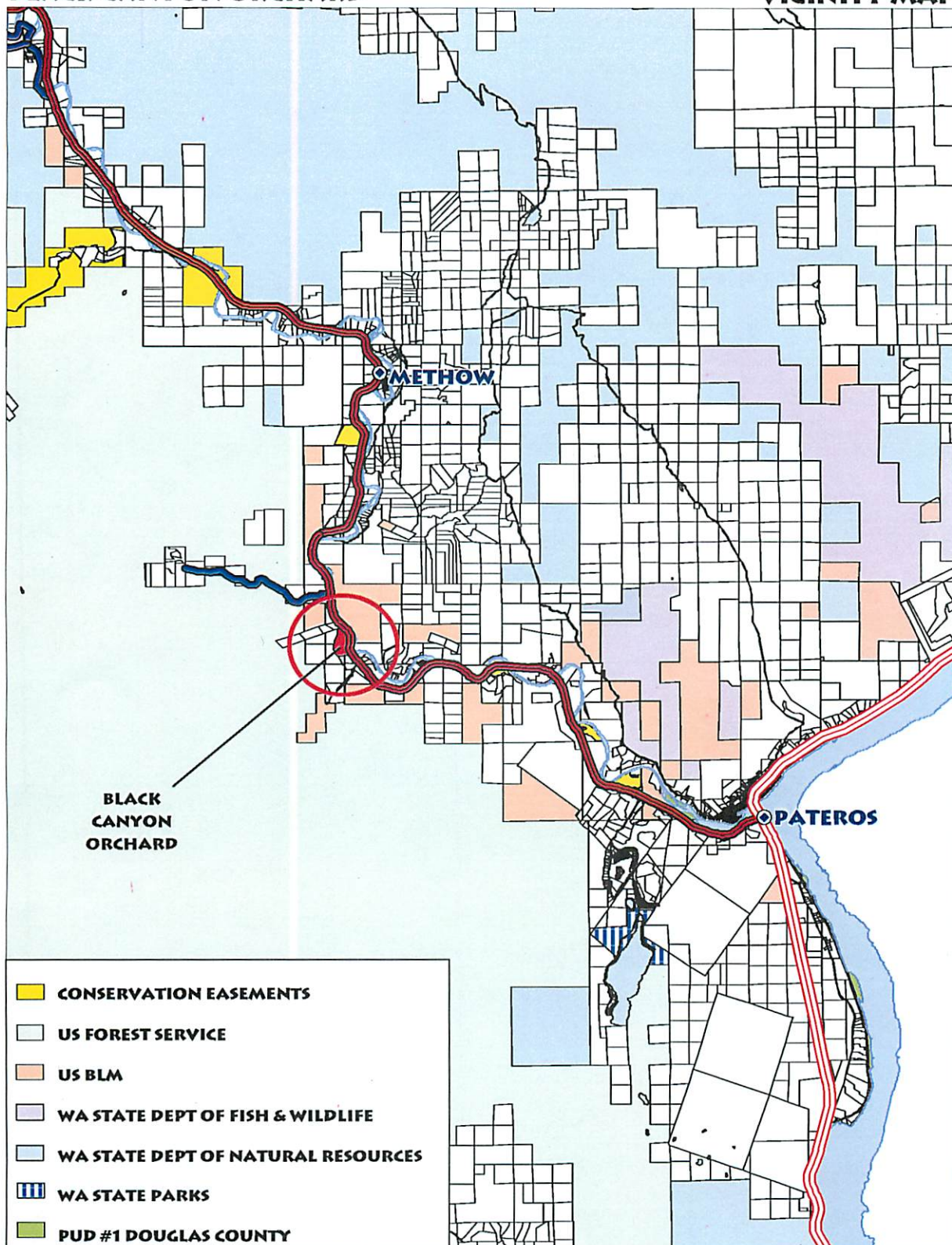
Projected Impact to County Property Tax Revenue: None

WWRP Programs to be Applied To: Farmland Preservation

Estimated WWRP Grant Request: \$92,500 + allowable transaction costs.

BLACK CANYON ORCHARD

VICINITY MAP



SCALE: 1 INCH = 1.85 MILES

4/25/16

NORTH

BLACK CANYON ORCHARD

SITE



 **PROPOSED CONSERVATION EASEMENT**
 **ORCHARDS**

SCALE: 1 INCH = 340 FEET
AERIAL: NAIP 2013
4/25/16

N
↑